

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, TU
SUBJECT: RECTOR OF MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY IS REMOVED

1. DECEMBER 24 PRESS WIDELY REPORTS REMOVAL OF MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY (METU) RECTOR, DR. ILGAZ ALYANAK. IN OFFICE ONLY SINCE LAST APRIL (HE HAD PREVIOUSLY SERVED AS ASSISTANT RECTOR UNDER THREE OTHER RECTORS), ALYANAK HAD LONG BEEN UNDER FIRE FROM THE RIGHT FOR ALLEGEDLY CODDLING LEFTISTS AND TURNING METU INTO A "HOTBED OF COMMUNISM." AN ABORTIVE ATTEMPT AT REMOVING HIM HAD ALLEGEDLY BEEN MADE AT A METU BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING TWO AND HALF WEEKS EARLIER, BUT ALYANAK HIMSELF BROUGHT MATTERS TO A HEAD WITH AN ULTIMATUM TO BOARD OF TRUSTEES CHAIRMAN AHMET SONEL DECEMBER 16.

2. IN THAT ULTIMATUM, ALYANAK HAD RECOUNTED HIS DIFFICULTIES WITH THE NEW BOARD, WHICH HAS BEEN IN OFFICE FOR LESS THAN FOUR MONTHS AND IS DOMINATED BY MEMBERS ORIENTED TOWARD THE JUSTICE PARTY AND THE NATIONAL SALVATION PARTY. AFTER STATING
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THAT IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE FOR HIM TO CONTINUE UNDER CURRENT RESTRAINTS, HE ALLEGEDLY SAID THAT SONEL SHOULD EITHER RESIGN OR TRY TO HAVE HIM REMOVED. ALTHOUGH ALYANAK HAS REPORTEDLY STATED THAT HE WILL CONTINUE TO RESIST, HIS REMOVAL HAS BEEN APPROVED BY BOTH THE BOARD AND THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION.

3. COMMENT: THREE METU FACULTY MEMBERS IN SEPARATE CONVERSATIONS HAVE TOLD EMBOFFS THAT THEY EXPECT THE UNIVERSITY'S STUDENT BODY TO SUPPORT ALYANAK IN THE CONTROVRSY. ALTHOUGH THE METU CAMPUS HAS BEEN RELATIVELY QUIET UNDER ALYANAK'S ADMINISTRATION (PARTLY BECAUSE, DUE TO PREVIOUS DISTURBANCES, OPENING OF THE CURRENT ACADEMIC YEAR WAS POSTPONED UNTIL THIS MONTH), EVEN ALYANAK HAD BEEN EXPECTING SERIOUS OUTBREAKS OF CAMPUS VIOLENCE THIS YEAR. ALYANAK'S REMOVAL COULD PROVIDE THE CATALYST FOR RENEWAL OF VIOLENCE BY METU'S LEFTIST-DOMINATED STUDENT BODY.
MACOMBER

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